



Overcoming Workaholism

Washington State Employee Assistance Program

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A workaholic is a person who is addicted to working and feels a compulsion to work. Many people admire the productivity and dedication of workaholics, but do not see the negative effects of workaholic behavior: Harm to one's physical, mental, and spiritual health, and neglect of family, and enjoyable pursuits.

Characteristics of the Workaholic

A workaholic isn't just a person who works a lot. To a workaholic, the job has top priority. The need to work is a driving force.

The workaholic spends his or her life on the job or working at home. He or she takes little or no time for a personal life; there is no balance in life.

How to Know if You Are a Workaholic

If you answer "yes" to three or more of these questions, you may be a workaholic:

- Do you value work more than spending time with family or doing any activity?
- Do you feel your work is never finished?
- Do you work on weekends, in the evenings, and on holidays?



- Is work your preferred activity, and do you talk about it constantly?
- Do you work 50 hours a week or more?
- Do you make all activities work related?
- Do you believe that you are the only one who takes sufficient responsibility at work and are indispensable to the company?
- Are you always late to events that are not work related?
- Do you volunteer for extra

work projects for which no one else has time?

- Do you underestimate the amount of time needed to complete work tasks?
- Do you believe that it's acceptable, even commendable, to work all the time?
- Do you disrespect those who establish priorities other than work?
- Are you afraid you will lose your job?
- Do you worry constantly about the future?
- Do you have a competitive, type A, hard-driving personality?
- Do you get upset when asked to take responsibility for family matters or non-work related tasks?
- Has your work schedule

caused problems between you and your spouse or family?

- Do you think about work constantly?
- Do you work during meals, while watching TV, or at family gatherings?
- Do you believe that work and money will solve all problems?

How to Stop Being a Workaholic

If being a workaholic is hurting you, your spouse, or your family, consider establishing a balance in your life. Here are some ways to do that:

- Limit your hours on the job to less than 50 per week. If

that is too difficult at first, cut down a few hours per week, each week, until you get down to 50.

- Set aside specific times each week to spend with your family.

- Find counseling to address your fears of job loss and failure.
- Put some effort into hobbies or personal, pleasurable pursuits.
- Establish an exercise program.

The Benefits of Balance

When your life is balanced between work and other pursuits, you may find that you feel less insecure, closer to your loved ones, healthier, and happier. No one is indispensable to any job or employer. It is not necessary or healthy to destroy your family and health in order to be indispensable.